

ENTERTAINMENT

# Whispers still lower the boom

By Tonya Flanagan  
Special to Sentinel-Voice

After 38 years in the entertainment industry, wow-ing fans with their awesome voices, smooth moves and romantic songs, The Whispers still have what it takes to bring a crowd to its feet.

The Whispers- Walter and Wallace "Scotty" Scott, Nicholas Caldwell and Leaveil Degree- played Friday night to a full house inside the Dallas Events Center at the Texas Station casino. The Whispers Band, featuring keyboardist Grady Wilkins, formerly of Las Vegas, backed the group.

Wearing fire red triple-button-front suits with matching silk shirts and shoes, The Whispers kicked off the show with "And The Beat Goes On." Fans quickly eased into a groove that continued throughout the 90-minute, power-packed concert. The Whispers absorbed the crowd's energy as they sang "Just Gets Better With Time" and "In The Mood," simultaneously performing suave dance routines.

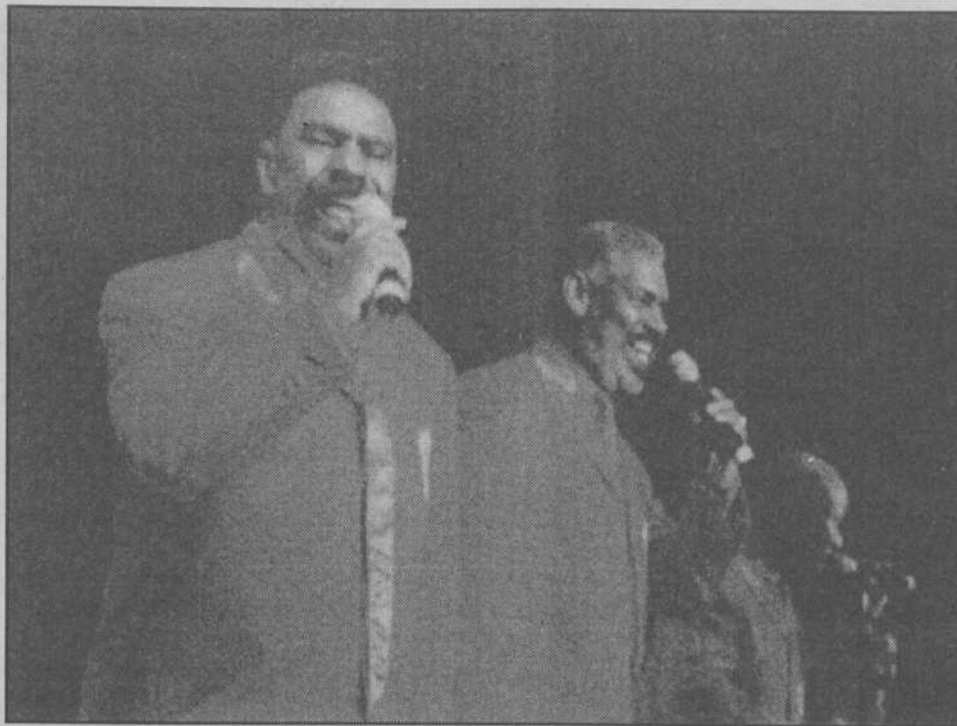
Leslie Hamm, 44, of Las Vegas, came with her girlfriends and said the non-stop performance was excellent.

"The Whispers still have it going on after all these years," she said. "Like they say, 'It just gets better with time,' well that's it."

The concert, The Whispers second in the city this year, drew nearly 2,000 people. Fans clapped, sang and danced in the aisles to the group's 1980s hits, "Keep On Loving' Me" and "It's a Love Thing." Intertwined with the dance tunes were the soft and sexy songs that have fueled The Whispers popularity as an R&B dynamo for the past three decades. Bringing back nostalgic memories, the group crooned "Lady," "Do They Turn You On" and "Say Yes."

Wallace "Scotty" Scott's sultry tenor voice conjured memories of yesterdays gone by when he belted out, "I'm gonna make you my wife," from the 1977 hit of the same title. Women screamed moments later when he sang, "Have you ever been kissed from head to toe, down your back and up by your navel?" It sounded so good he sang it twice, inviting the audience to join in.

Wallace and his brother formed The Whispers in Watts, Calif., their native city, in the early 1960s. In 1971, Leaveil Degree joined the group and they contracted



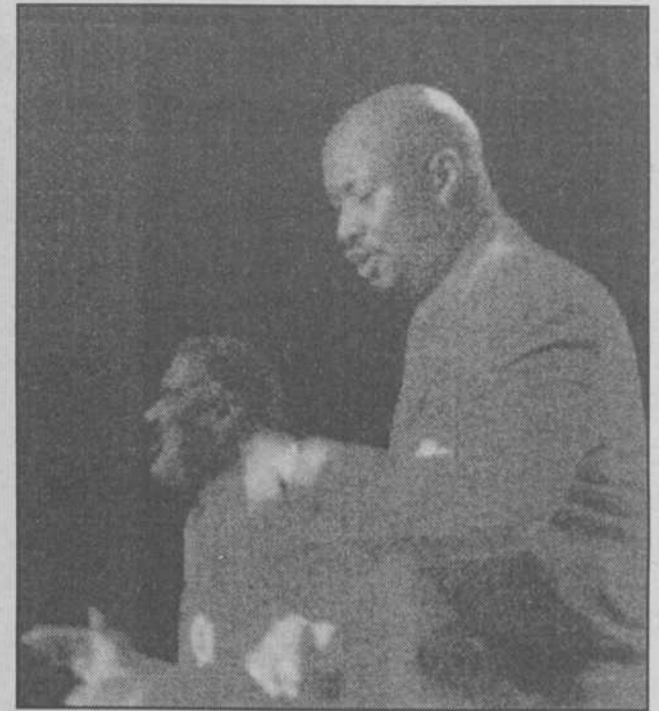
"SCOTTY"

with the now-defunct Soul Train record label co-owned by Don Cornelius, former host of the popular TV show of the same name.

In 1980, the group experienced its first record-breaking hit with "And The Beat Goes On," which went gold and topped the R&B and Disco charts less than six weeks after it debuted. They churned out hits throughout the 1980s, producing three gold albums, "Christmas Moments," "Love Is Where You Find It" and "Love For Love," as well as two platinum compilations, "The Whispers" and "Imagination."

Longevity is something The Whispers boast, said radio personality Steven Topper, 41, who spun their tunes on California and Arizona radio stations in the 1980s. He came to the show with his wife, Lexi, 36. Describing it as fantastic, Topper said he would have changed only one thing: "I would have taken out one of the band solos and had them sing more songs, because they have so much material."

Many shared his sentiments as they lingered in the concert hall, shouting and applauding, hoping to coax the group to do an encore...as the house lights came up and the band's rhythm faded in the air.



Sentinel-Voice photos by Ramon Savoy

The Whispers, Walter Scott (left), Nicholas Caldwell and Leaveil Degree (above), rocked the crowd at the Dallas Events Center Friday night.

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